

# ENROLMENT AND ORIENTATION

## FUNDED KINDERGARTEN

QUALITY AREA 6 | ELAA version 1.1



### PURPOSE

This policy provides a clear set of guidelines and procedures for:

- enrolling a child at Tarralla Kindergarten
- the orientation of new families and children into Tarralla Kindergarten
- ensuring compliance with Victorian and national legislation, including disability discrimination, anti-discrimination, human rights laws, No Jab No Play and Department of Education and Training [DET] Kindergarten Funding Guide.
- ensuring access to participation, especially for vulnerable and disadvantaged children
- ensuring early entry applicants (this includes children younger than three years and children younger than four years old on 30 April in the year they will attend kindergarten) are given equitable access to enrolment.
- adhering to the DET's priority of access requirements for both three and four-year-old children



### POLICY STATEMENT

#### VALUES

Tarralla Kindergarten is committed to:

- families feeling respected, safe and supported during the enrolment process
- ensuring families who may experience barriers to accessing kindergarten are proactively engaged
- being flexible and catering for unique family circumstances and needs
- being transparent in the process and allocation of places through consistent communication and information sharing
- ensuring the registration, allocation and enrolment process is simple to understand, follow and implement
- maintaining confidentiality in relation to all information provided for enrolment
- promoting fair and equitable access to kindergarten programs, including those who face barriers to participation
- enrolling Early Start Kindergarten (*refer to Definitions*) eligible children into full 15 hours of kindergarten program

#### SCOPE

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Tarralla Kindergarten, including during offsite excursions and activities.



RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
Providing a funded kindergarten program to children who turn four years of age by 30 April in the year they will attending, that is delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher, and offering at least: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 hours per week for 40 weeks of the year, or</li> <li>• 600 hours per year</li> </ul>	R				
Providing a funded kindergarten program to children who turn three years of age by 30 April in the year they will attending, that is delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher and offering a minimum of 5 hours per week.	R				
Communicating to families the days and times the service will operate, planned closures (including public holidays and child-free days), details of any planned alternative sessions, and unplanned teacher absences or emergency situations	R				
Following the Priority of Access criteria to funded programs at Tarralla Kindergarten, as described in Department of Education and Training's [DET] <i>The Kindergarten Funding Guide (refer to Attachment 1)</i>	R	√	√		
Communicating and providing advice to families regarding the best time to commence kindergarten for children born between January and April	√	√	√		
Supporting inclusion and access through specific funding stream (for eligible families): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kindergarten Fee Subsidy <i>(refer to Definitions)</i></li> <li>• Early Start Kindergarten <i>(refer to Definitions)</i></li> <li>• Early Start Kindergarten extension grants <i>(refer to Definitions)</i></li> <li>• Access to Early Learning <i>(refer to Definitions)</i></li> <li>• Second year of funded four-year-old kindergarten <i>(refer to Definitions)</i></li> </ul>	R	√	√		
Supporting families whose children may be eligible for early entry to kindergarten or late entry to kindergarten and school exemption <i>(refer to Attachment 2)</i>	√	√	√		
Providing communication to families explaining how they can only access one funded kindergarten program per child, per year.	R	√			

Considering any barriers to access that may exist, developing procedures that ensure all eligible families are aware of, and are able to access a kindergarten program	R	√	√		
Complying with the <i>Inclusion and Equity Policy</i>	R	R	√	√	√
Ensuring the collection of accurate, consistent and timely kindergarten data, to monitor and proactively manage capacity, utilisation of services and to meet School Readiness Funding requirements	R	R			
Ensuring families have access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent handbook</li> <li>• <i>Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy and/or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety</i></li> <li>• <i>Fees Policy</i></li> <li>• Privacy Statement</li> <li>• <i>Code of Conduct Policy</i></li> </ul>	R	√	√		
Appointing a person to be responsible for the enrolment process and the day-to-day implementation of this policy ( <i>refer to Attachment 2 and 3</i> )	R				
Responding to enrolment enquiries on a day-to-day basis and referring people to the person responsible for the enrolment process as required	√	√	√		
Considering access and inclusion for vulnerable children in the allocation of places at the service ( <i>refer to Attachment 1 and 2</i> )	R	√			
Complying with the service's <i>Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i> in relation to the collection and management of a child's enrolment information	R	R	R	√	√
Providing opportunities for interested families to attend the service during operational hours to observe the program and become familiar with the service prior to their child commencing in the program except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, or conflict with any duty of the approved provider, nominated supervisor, early childhood teachers or educators under the <i>National Law: Section 167</i> .	R	√	√		
Providing parents/guardians with information about the requirements of the law for enrolment, including obtaining the AIR Immunisation History Statement ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) and accessing immunisation services	R	√	√		
Ensuring parents/guardians are only offered a tentative place until the AIR Immunisation History Statement ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) has been assessed as being acceptable or the child has been assessed as eligible for the grace period	R	√	√		
Assessing the child's immunisation documentation as defined by the Immunisation Enrolment Toolkit ( <i>refer to Sources</i> ) for early childhood education and care services prior to enrolment to determine if the child's vaccination status complies with requirements or whether the child is eligible for the 16-week grace period ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> )	R	√	√		
Ensuring that only children whose AIR Immunisation History Statements ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) have been assessed as being	R	√	√		

acceptable or who are eligible for the grace period ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) have confirmed places in the program					
Advising parents/guardians who do not have an AIR Immunisation History Statement ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) and who are not eligible for the grace period that their children are not able to attend the service and referring them to immunisation services ( <i>refer to Attachment 4</i> )	R	√	√		
Taking reasonable steps to obtain an up to date AIR Immunisation History Statement ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) from a parent/guardian of a child enrolled under a grace period within 16 weeks from when the child begins attending ( <b>Note:</b> the child can continue to attend the service if acceptable immunisation documentation is not obtained).	R	√	√		
Completing the enrolment record prior to their child's commencement at the service and providing AIR Immunisation History Statement ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) of their child's immunisation status				√	
Where a child is eligible for the 16 weeks grace period, ensuring that the child's immunisations are updated in line with the schedule and providing an up to date AIR Immunisation History Statement ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) to the service				√	
Taking reasonable steps to obtain an up to date AIR Immunisation History Statement ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) from all parents/guardians after enrolment, timing reminders to comply with the maximum seven-month interval ( <i>Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 107, Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 Section 143E</i> )	R	√	√		
Ensuring all authorised nominees ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) have been completed on the enrolment record ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) ( <i>Regulations 160 and 161</i> )	R	√		√	
Ensuring that the enrolment record ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) both digital and/or hard copy complies with the requirements of <i>Regulations 160, 161, 162</i> and that it effectively meets the management requirements of the service	R	√	√		
Ensuring that enrolment record ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) is kept up to date if family circumstances change, and that services are made aware if they become eligible for additional funding as a result of changed circumstances (e.g. if a child acquires a Health Care Card the child becomes available for Kindergarten Fee Subsidy; if the child or family becomes known to Child Protection, the child becomes eligible for Early Start Kindergarten and Early Start Kindergarten Extension grant).	R	√	√	√	√
Ensuring that enrolment records ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) are stored in a safe and secure place, and kept for three years after the last date on which the child was educated and cared for by the service ( <i>Regulation 183 (1a) (2d)</i> )	R	√	√		
Discussing the individual child's needs with parents/guardians and developing an orientation program to assist them to settle into the service. The service should take into consideration barriers parents/guardians may have in disclosing sensitive	R	√	√		

information including communication and information barriers and the development of trusting relationships.					
Reviewing the orientation processes for new families and children to ensure the objectives of this policy are met	<b>R</b>	√	√	√	
Ensuring that parents/guardians of a child attending the service can enter the service premises at any time whilst the child is being educated and cared for ( <i>Regulation 157</i> ), except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, or conflict with any duty of the approved provider, nominated supervisor, early childhood teachers or educators under the <i>National Law: Section 167</i>	<b>R</b>	<b>R</b>	√	√	√
Taking reasonable steps to contact non-attending families prior to the cancellation of their enrolment ( <i>refer to Attachment 5</i> )	√	√	√		
Reviewing enrolment applications to identify children with additional needs ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> and the <i>Inclusion and Equity Policy</i> )	√	√	√		
Encouraging parents/guardians to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>stay with their child as long as required during the settling in period</li> <li>make contact with educators at the service, when required</li> </ul>	√	√	√	√	
Assisting parents/guardians to develop and maintain a routine for saying goodbye to their child	√	√	√	√	
Sharing information with parents/guardians concerning their child's progress with regard to settling in to the service	√	√	√	√	
Discussing support services for children with parents/guardians, where required such as Pre School Field Officer, Early Intervention Programs, and Maternal Health Services	√	√	√	√	
Developing strategies to assist new families to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>feel welcomed into the service become familiar with service policies and procedures</li> <li>share information about their family beliefs, values and culture and feel culturally safe</li> <li>share their understanding of their child's strengths, interests, abilities and needs</li> <li>value the voice of the child, ensuring they have opportunity to articulate their individual interests and needs</li> <li>discuss the values and expectations they hold in relation to their child's learning</li> <li>providing comfort and reassurance to children who are showing signs of distress when separating</li> </ul>	√	√	√	√	
Reading and complying with this <i>Enrolment and Orientation Policy</i>	<b>R</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R</b>	√	√
Updating information by notifying the service of any changes as they occur, for example obtaining or the cancellation of a Health Care Card; if the child or family becomes known to Child Protection				√	
Notifying Tarralla Kindergarten in writing if they wish to cancel their enrolment.				√	



## PROCEDURES

The information contained within the procedure is to be used as a guide and modified according to the services context.

### GENERAL ORIENTATION PROCEDURES

The time required for orientation and settling in will vary for each child and their family, therefore it is important to be flexible and individualise orientation for each family.

- Offer families the opportunity to visit the service at different times during the day/session, this allows the child and their family to become familiar with the various routines of the service
- Provide reassurance to the family that they may stay with their child for as long as they choose during orientation and once the child commences
- Provide the family with suggestions for developing and maintaining a routine for saying goodbye to their child
- Reassure the family:
  - they can leave their child initially for a shorter day, gradually increasing the length of time
  - they may call and speak to their child's early childhood teacher or educator(s) at an agreed time
  - the early childhood teacher/educators will keep them informed on how their child is settling in
  - they will be informed about any changes or circumstances which may affect them or their child.
- Further considerations may include but are not limited to:
  - send an email during the day to update the family on their child including a photo of the child (if the child has settled in) (*refer to the information and Communication Technology Policy*). **Note:** For children in out-of-home care, the educator may need to seek permission from Child Protection before taking and distributing photos of the child
  - asking the family how they have settled in and if they have any questions or concerns.
- Refer to *Attachment 2* for the general kindergarten registration and enrolment procedures
- Refer to *Attachment 5* for cancellation of enrolment and non-attendance procedures.

### BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION



#### BACKGROUND

The *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* require approved services to have a policy and procedures in place in relation to enrolment and orientation (*Regulation 168(2) (k)*).

It is intended by 2022 that all eligible Victorian children (*refer to Definitions*) will have access to two years of kindergarten before commencing school. Where demand is higher than availability, approved providers must adhere to their eligibility and DET's Priority of Access criteria (*refer to Definitions and Attachment 1*) in order to allocate the available places. The criteria used to determine the allocation of places takes account of the requirements set out in DET's Kindergarten Funding Guide (*refer to Sources*), the service's philosophy, values and beliefs, and the provisions of the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*. The Victorian Government requires funded organisations to ensure that their policies and procedures promote equal opportunity for all children. Services participating in a central registration and enrolment scheme are required to comply with the registration and/or enrolment procedures of that scheme.



The Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme (MIKA), co-designed by DET provides access to families to register for and secure a place for their children in kindergarten. It is a collaborative model that brings together councils, service providers, MCH staff, support services and other stakeholders to support children and their families. In 2020 more than half of all local councils across Victoria operate a form of central enrolment or central registration scheme. These schemes provide a single point of entry for families, simplifying the kindergarten enrolment process and improving equity of access.

Immunisations are an effective means of reducing the risk of vaccine preventable diseases. Early childhood education and care services which are regulated under the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 and Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* have legislative responsibilities under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* to only offer a confirmed place in their programs to children with an Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Immunisation History Statement (*refer to Definitions*).

## LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 160, 161, 162, 168, 170, 171, 177, 181, 183
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities
- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)
- Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 (Vic)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: [www.legislation.vic.gov.au](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au)
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: [www.legislation.gov.au](http://www.legislation.gov.au)



## DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms e.g. approved provider, nominated supervisor, notifiable complaints, serious incidents, duty of care, etc. refer to the Definitions file of the PolicyWorks catalogue.

**Access to Early Learning (AEL):** a program for a child who is at least three years old on April 30th in the year of enrolment, providing intensive support to eligible families with multiple and complex needs, assisting them to access universal kindergarten programs.

**Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) Immunisation History Statement:** The AIR is a national register administered by Medicare that records all vaccinations given in Australia, including to children. In the case of medical contraindication, an authorised medical practitioner completes and signs a Medical Exemption Form and supplies it to the AIR (previous forms of documentation, for example a letter from a GP or local council, are no longer acceptable).

**Authorised nominee:** (In relation to this policy) is a person who has been given written authority by the parents/guardians of a child to collect that child from the education and care service. These details will be on the child's enrolment form.

**Children/families experiencing vulnerability and/or disadvantage** (in relation to this policy): children are vulnerable if the capacity of parents and family to effectively care, protect and provide for their long-term development and wellbeing is limited. Some factors which may contribute to a child experiencing vulnerability include: a child with a disability; living in a family with a low income, or one which is experiencing problems with housing, domestic violence, substance abuse, or mental health; known to child protection; in statutory out-of-home care; Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, having a culturally and linguistically diverse background; having a young or sole parent, or a parent with a disability (adapted from the Kindergarten Funding Guide)

**Children with additional needs:** Children whose development or physical condition requires specialist support or children who may need additional support due to language, refugee or asylum seeker experience, complex trauma, cultural or economic circumstances (*refer to Inclusion and Equity Policy*) (*refer to Children/families experiencing vulnerability and/or disadvantage Definition*).

**Central Registration and Enrolment Scheme (MIKA):** MIKA provides a single point for families to apply for multiple kindergarten services within a local government area, helping them secure a place that meets their needs and enabling funded kindergartens to work collaboratively with other services to engage vulnerable and disadvantaged families.

**Deferral:** When a child does not attend in the year when they are eligible for a funded kindergarten place or is officially withdrawn from a service prior to the annual confirmation in April DET considers that this child has not accessed a year of funded kindergarten and is therefore eligible for a DET funded kindergarten place in the following year.

**Early Start Kindergarten (ESK):** Early Start Kindergarten provides eligible children with 15 hours of free or low-cost kindergarten each week led by a qualified Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registered teacher. ESK is available to children who are at least three years old by 30 April in the year they are enrolled to attend the program and are:

- from a refugee or asylum seeker background, or
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, or
- known to child protection.

These children can also access free or low cost year-before-school kindergarten through the ESK Extension Grant regardless of whether they have accessed ESK in the previous year.

**Early Start Kindergarten extension grants:** provides eligible children with 15 hours of free or low cost kindergarten each week led by a qualified VIT registered teacher. The ESK extension grants are available to children attending kindergarten in the year-before-school and are:

- not eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy
- from a refugee or asylum seeker background, or Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, or
- known to child protection.
- A child is not required to access ESK in the previous year to access the ESK extension grant.

**Eligible child:** as defined by the Victorian DET Kindergarten Funding Guide:

- a child who is at least four years old on 30 April in the year of attendance; enrolled for at least 15 hours per week or 600 hours per year in a Four-Year-Old Kindergarten; and not enrolled at a funded kindergarten program at another service
- a child who is at least three years old on 30 April in the year of attendance and is enrolled in a funded Three-Year-Old Kindergarten for a minimum of 5 hours per week
- any child that is enrolled in an early childhood and education and care service must have an AIR Immunisation History Statement that indicates that the child is fully vaccinated for their age or who qualifies for the 16-weeks grace period



**Enrolment record:** the collection of documents which contains information on each child as required under the National Regulations (*Regulations 160, 161, 162*) including but not limited to parent details; emergency contacts; authorised nominee; transportation authorisations, details of any court orders; and health information including immunisation status. Enrolment records are stored securely in the service due to their confidential nature.

**Kindergarten application fee:** a payment to cover administrative costs associated with the processing of a child's enrolment application for a place in at the service, if applicable.

**Kindergarten application form:** The process of families providing initial information about their child to confirm their intention to enrol in kindergarten, administered by MIKA (*refer to Definition*). This includes collection of basic contact information, kindergarten preferences and any other details that may inform prioritised allocation in kindergarten (*refer to Attachment 3*)

**Grace period:** allows specific categories of children of families experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage to enrol and attend the service without an AIR Immunisation History Statement (*refer to Definitions*) or when the statement is assessed as not being up-to-date. Services complete the grace period eligibility form with families during enrolment, and keep a copy with the child's enrolment record. The 16-week grace period starts on the first day of the child's attendance at the service. During the grace period, the service is required to take reasonable steps to obtain the AIR Immunisation History Statement (*refer to Definitions*) and to encourage families to access immunisation services.

**Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (KFS):** Promotes kindergarten participation by enabling eligible children in funded three and four-year-old groups to access up to 15 hours of kindergarten delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher free of charge or at low cost.

**Local Government Area (LGA):** a geographic area governed by a local council or shire

**MIKA :** Maroondah Integrated Kindergarten Association – the Maroondah council central enrolment platform where enrolments for Tarralla are registered.

**Priority of access:** in instances where more eligible children apply for a place at a service than there are places available, the service must allocate spaces using the criteria outlined in the DET Kindergarten Funding Guide (*refer to Attachment 1 and Sources*).

**Registration:** The process of families and carers giving initial information about their child to confirm their intention to enrol in kindergarten, administered by MIKA. This includes collection of basic contact information, kindergarten preferences and any other details that may inform prioritised allocation in kindergarten.

**School Readiness Funding:** funding provided by DET for programs and supports that builds the capacity of kindergarten services, educators and families to support children's learning and development outcomes.

**Second year of funded four-year-old kindergarten:** second year eligibility may be considered when a child shows delays in key outcomes of learning and development. An assessment is carried out for each child by an early childhood teacher in Term 4 (the year before the child is to attend school) when a second year is being considered.

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## SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

### SOURCES

- Australian Childhood Immunisation Register: [www.servicesaustralia.gov.au](http://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au)
- Australian Government Department of Health, National Immunisation Program Schedule: [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)
- Department of Health and Human Services, Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care service: [www2.health.vic.gov.au](http://www2.health.vic.gov.au)
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au)

- Guide to the National Quality Standard: [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au)
- Priority of Access Guidelines for child care service: [www.dese.gov.au](http://www.dese.gov.au)
- The Kindergarten Funding Guide (Victorian Department of Education and Training): [www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au)

### Related Policies

- Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations
- Compliments and Complaints
- Dealing with Infectious Disease
- Fees
- Inclusion and Equity
- Privacy and Confidentiality

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## EVALUATION



In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notifying all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk (*Regulation 172*).

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## ATTACHMENTS



- Attachment 1: Attachment 1 – Eligibility and priority of access criteria for 3 and 4-year-old funded kindergarten program
- Attachment 2: General kindergarten registration and enrolment procedures
- Attachment 3: Sample kindergarten enrolment form
- Attachment 4: Letter for parents/guardians without acceptable immunisation documentation
- Attachment 5: Cancellation of enrolment and non-attendance

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## AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of Tarralla Kindergarten on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

**REVIEW DATE:** 30 / JULY / 2023



## ATTACHMENT 1. ELIGIBILITY AND PRIORITY OF ACCESS CRITERIA

### FOR A FUNDED KINDERGARTEN THREE OR FOUR-YEAR-OLD KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

The following children are eligible for attendance in the funded kindergarten programs:

- children who turn four years of age by 30 April in the year they will attend four year old kindergarten, or who turn three years of age by 30 April in the year they will attend three year old kindergarten.
- children turning six years of age at kindergarten who have been granted an exemption from school-entry age requirements by the regional office of DET (refer to *The Kindergarten Guide*, available at <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/child-care-kindergarten/Pages/kindergarten-school-age.aspx>)
- children who were eligible to attend in the previous year, but;
  - deferred
  - withdrew from the service prior to data collection.
- children may enrol in three year old kindergarten before they turn three years of age but are subject to the following conditions:
  - Children cannot attend the kindergarten sessions before their third birthday.
  - Children under three years of age may attend the first orientation session that is also attended by their parent/guardian.
  - Children under three years of age can attend one full session before their birthday for orientation purposes, provided they are supervised by an adult for the entire session. The session date is to be agreed upon by consultation between the parent/guardian and the educator.
- children who have been granted approval to receive funding for a second year of four year old kindergarten in accordance with *The Kindergarten Guide* available at [www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/funding/Pages/kinderfundingcriteria.aspx)
- children who are younger than the eligible age for four year old kindergarten, but whose parents/guardians have submitted an early age entry request for their child to attend school the following year. This written request is to be directed to the regional office of DET, or the non-government school the child will be attending. A copy of the approval must be attached to the kindergarten application. Parents/guardians should note that very few requests are approved by DET. If the child attends kindergarten early, but does not proceed to school in the following year, they will be unable to access a second year of kindergarten unless they are deemed eligible by DET for having recognised developmental needs
- three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and children known to Child Protection may be eligible for the Early Start Kindergarten program. This scheme provides funding to enable children to attend a kindergarten program that is planned and delivered by an early childhood teacher for a specific number of hours. Details are available at: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/child-care-kindergarten/Pages/early-start-kindergarten.aspx>

Kindergartens are required to support vulnerable families to access kindergarten programs and consider potential barriers to participation and how they might be addressed. **There are categories of 'Priority of Access' for children that are required to have access to a funded kindergarten program. MIKA must provide places for these children first.** These categories reflect the Commonwealth guidelines on priority for allocating places in approved education and care services

DET's Priority of Access criteria	Process that could be used to verify need(s)
Children at risk of abuse or neglect, including children in Out-of-Home Care	<p>The child is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This information can be obtained from the child's carer/family as part of the enrolment process and/or received from a referral source which may include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Child Protection</li> <li>○ Child and family services (family services referral and support team, Child FIRST/integrated family services/Services Connect case worker)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Maternal and Child Health nurse, or</li> <li>○ Out-of-Home Care provider</li> </ul>
<b>Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● As part of the enrolment process, service providers must respectfully ask families ‘is your child Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?’</li> </ul>
<b>Asylum seeker and refugee children</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● As part of the enrolment process, service providers should respectfully ask whether the family/child holds a visa or ImmiCard identifying the child and/or parents as a refugee or asylum seeker</li> </ul>
<b>Children eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A child or parent holds a Commonwealth Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Veteran’s Affairs Card, or</li> <li>● Multiple birth children (triplets, quadruplets).</li> <li>● Asylum seeker and/or refugee children</li> </ul>
<b>Children with additional needs, defined as children who:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● require additional assistance in order to fully participate in the kindergarten program</li> <li>● require a combination of services which are individually planned</li> <li>● have an identified specific disability or developmental delay</li> </ul>	The child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● is assessed as having delays in two or more areas and is declared eligible for a second funded year of 4-year-old kindergarten, or</li> <li>● holds a Child Disability Health Care Card, or</li> <li>● has previously been approved for Kindergarten Inclusion Support Package, or referred by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the National Disability Insurance Scheme</li> <li>○ Early Childhood Intervention Service</li> <li>○ Preschool Field Officer, or</li> <li>○ Maternal and Child Health nurse</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

#### Remaining Places

- Will be allocated according to proximity to the kindergarten

**Note:** DET’s PoA guidelines are to ensure that kindergarten programs are available to those children who stand to benefit the most from attending early education. Where programs for three- and four-year old children are provided separately, the PoA criteria will be applied separately for each age cohort.

#### \* Early Start Kindergarten and Three-Year-Old Kindergarten

During the roll-out of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten, Early Start Kindergarten (ESK) (*refer to Definitions*) will continue to provide 15 hours a week of funded kindergarten for all eligible children up until 2029, when three-year-old children across the state will have access to 15 hours

It is important to continue to enrol eligible children in ESK, even if funded Three-Year-Old Kindergarten is available at the service.

This guarantees that children experiencing vulnerability will continue to be enrolled in the full 15 hours of kindergarten in all service settings, including long day care. It also ensures that service providers can continue to receive all funding entitlements.

Service providers are expected to continue to provide the full 15 hours funded through Early Start Kindergarten, even in instances where three-year-old groups are being offered fewer than 15 hours.

ESK is available to children who turn three years of age by 30 April in the year of enrolment and who:

- are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- are known to Child Protection
- have a refugee or asylum seeker background\*

\*Children/families without a current refugee visa or ImmiCard who have a recent refugee experience may be eligible by exception for Early Start Kindergarten, for more information contact your local Department of Education and Training office.

Refer to the Department of Education and Training website for up-to-date information: [www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au)

## ATTACHMENT 2. GENERAL KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION AND ENROLMENT PROCEDURES

### KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION PROCESS

Stage	MIKA Role	Family Role	Kindergarten Role
1. Proactive engagement and awareness	Ensures families are aware of the importance of ECEC, MIKA and available assistance to help them engage with MIKA.	Searches for information about ECEC and MIKA.  Receives information from a service provider, MCH staff or support service they have contact with.	Communicates information about ECEC and MIKA to families  Obtains consent for family contact details to be shared with MIKA.
2. Registration	Obtains information about children to initiate the process of allocating places.	Completes a registration form.	Supports families to complete registration forms if they find it difficult, or refers them directly to MIKA.
3. Allocation	Equitably allocates kindergarten places and optimise the supply and demand of places.	Receives an update on the progress of their registration.	
4. Confirmation and communication	Clearly communicates with families and carers to confirm their allocated place and inform service providers of their enrolment list.	Accepts their offer of place, defers the offer to the following year, or declines the place and goes on waitlist for another kinder.	Supports families to understand what an offer means and what they need to do next.
5. MIKA planning, maintenance and development	Plans for success every year by evaluating and improving MIKA.	Begins to engage with the service provider to start the enrolment process.	Supports families to enrol and begin kindergarten.  Provides feedback to the MIKA about your experience so they can improve it for the coming year.

\* If the kindergarten believes a family will need extra support completing a registration form or are likely to miss the first round registration date, refer them to MIKA with the attached referral form. MIKA will follow up with this family or carer to offer support in getting their children into kindergarten.

#### Kindergarten registration dates

If families miss the registration close deadline, they can still register although they will be less likely to get their top preference. MIKA will continue to allocate children to kindergarten places where they are available. More places may become available as children move kindergartens or withdraw, or when kindergartens add capacity.

Date	Activity
1 <sup>st</sup> March	Registrations open
30 <sup>th</sup> June	Registrations close*
1 <sup>st</sup> August	First round offers
15 <sup>th</sup> August	Acceptance of first round offers due
Ongoing from 15 <sup>th</sup> August. If places are not available they will be placed on a waitlist	Subsequent offers on an individual basis

\*Registrations will still be accepted after 30 June, but registrations received prior will be allocated first. Children eligible for Priority of Access will be prioritised regardless of when registration is received.

## Registration

Tarralla Kindergarten undertakes enrolments through M.I.K.A (Maroondah Integrated Kindergarten System).

Enrolment application forms can be filled out online through the MIKA website [www.mika.org.au](http://www.mika.org.au). If you are unable to apply online then enrolment application forms are also available from Tarralla Kindergarten, Maroondah City Council Offices, Maternal and Child Health Centres. The MIKA website also provides information about the requirements of the law for enrolment, locating and accessing immunisation services and obtaining acceptable immunisation documentation.

Families cannot register directly with the kindergarten, they must go through the centralised registration process. Kindergarten's can direct families to register through MIKA and assist them to complete the registration.

Enrolment applications for the funded 4 year old program will be accepted for children turning 4 by the 30<sup>th</sup> of April of the year of commencement.

Enrolment applications for the funded 3 year old program will be accepted for children turning 3 by the 30<sup>th</sup> of April of the year of commencement.

A separate application form must be completed for each child, and for each proposed year of attendance at the centre. If your child is being enrolled in a second funded year of four year old kindergarten your teacher will advise MIKA that a place is to be held for your child while they apply for this through the DET. Enrolment forms for the proposed year will still need to be filled out but no application through MIKA is required.

Parents/guardians of children currently attending a three-year-old program must also submit an enrolment application form for the following year.

The registration form asks families for:

- Basic information about the child including name, date of birth, language spoken at home, previous kindergarten attendance and immunisation status.
- Details of any additional support the child might require due to a disability including intellectual, sensory or physical impairment.
- Contact details for the family or carer and any additional adults that should be kept informed throughout the process (e.g. another family member, a case worker or other support service staff member the family or carer trusts).
- Whether the child is identified as fulfilling any of the following criteria:
  - Is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
  - Is from a multiple birth (triplet or greater)
  - Is known to Child Protection
  - Is in Out-Of-Home Care
  - Holds, or has a family member who holds, a Commonwealth Health Care Card, Commonwealth Pensioner Concession Card, Department of Veteran's Affairs Gold Card or White Card, or a Refugee or Asylum Seeker Visa.

Parents/guardians of children currently attending a three-year-old program must submit an enrolment application form for the following year for the four-year-old program.

All enrolment applications must be accompanied by;

- Proof of identity: the child's birth certificate, birth notice or passport
- Proof of residence: a utility bill, rental agreement or rates notice with family name and address (this must be the main residence of the child).
- A current Australian Immunisation Register history statement.
- Subsidy card and immigration visas (where applicable).
- Documents from Family Support Services or a MCH nurse confirming high support needs and/or disability, or letter from a doctor for complex medical needs (where applicable).
- Credit card (to pay the registration fee). The fee can also be paid in person at their nearest council office. This fee is waived for all families and carers eligible for ESK/KFS/priority allocation.

All applications must be accompanied by an enrolment application processing fee, payable to M.I.K.A. A **\$27.00 (non-refundable, but transferable) Enrolment Application Fee**, payable to "Maroondah Integrated Kindergarten's Association

Inc.". **If you are enrolling under the Priority of Access Guidelines, the enrolment application fee is waived.** This information will remain confidential. This charge covers the cost of administration of the MIKA central enrolment scheme and is not a deposit for kindergarten fees.

**M.I.K.A is responsible for all allocation of places – Tarralla Kindergarten is not involved in this process.** Acceptance Offers of places will be sent to applicants on the first business day on or after the 1st of August in the year prior to commencement.

Upon receiving a place, if you wish to accept, a **\$100** Enrolment Fee is payable to Tarralla Kindergarten along with your **confirmation via the link on the acceptance offer** by the date nominated (Refer to the Fees policy for further details). This fee is waived for anyone falling under the Priority of Access guidelines.

Applicants who are successful will be notified, by email, of a confirmed place. Offer of places in the funded three-year-old programs and funded four-year-old programs will be made at the same time.

Subsequent round offers will be made **continuously** until all places are filled.

Parents/guardians who do not wish to accept the offer of a tentative or confirmed place, or intend to defer or withdraw their enrolment, are requested to notify MIKA, the Approved Provider, or the person responsible for managing the enrolment process at the service, in writing as soon as possible.

When there are more applications than places available, M.I.K.A. will determine the priority of access (refer to the M.I.K.A website, [www.mika.org.au](http://www.mika.org.au))

Enrolment applications will be accepted any time from the 1<sup>st</sup> March until the 30<sup>th</sup> June in the year prior to commencement.

Applications will be entered on the waiting list using the eligibility and priority of access criteria.

## Enrolment

Once a kindergarten place has been accepted, the enrolment process can begin.

Enrolment forms and other relevant documents and information will be provided by Tarralla Kindergarten to the parent/guardian after a confirmed place has been accepted and the enrolment fee has been paid (if applicable). This information will also include the requirements of the law for enrolment, locating and accessing immunisation services, obtaining an up-to-date AIR Immunisation History Statement and a how to access a copy of the *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*.

To enrol a child, families will need to provide copies of (if not already done so):

- Concession cards and immigration visas (where applicable).
- Documents from Family Support Services or a Maternal and Child Health nurse confirming high support needs and/or disability or letter from a doctor for complex medical needs (where applicable).
- Documents detailing any medical conditions or requirements the child has.
- Immunisation History Statement (unless experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage). More information is available at <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-children/no-jab-no-play/immunisation-enrolment-toolkit>. This statement must be up to date at least two months prior to the child first attending the service in order for a confirmed place to be offered.

The Immunisation History Statement is assessed as outlined in the *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care services* by the person responsible for the enrolment process on behalf of the Approved Provider. The "Key dates work form for immunisation and enrolment" in the *Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care services* is used to determine the date at which immunisations must be up to date. The toolkit also provides guidance on assessing immunisation documentation to determine if a child is up to date or qualifies for an exemption. The following documents and resources can be accessed from <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au>:

- The Immunisation enrolment toolkit for early childhood education and care services (search 'Immunisation enrolment toolkit')
- The Key dates work form for Immunisation and enrolment (search 'Key Dates work form')
- Hard copies of the immunisation resources (search 'immunisation resources order form')

The acceptable outcomes of the assessment for offering a confirmed place are:



- That the next due vaccine for the child on the AIR Immunisation History Statement is within the acceptable timeframe for an enrolment, or;
- That the child has been assessed by Tarralla Kindergarten as being eligible for a 16-week grace period

The person responsible for the enrolment process advises the parent/guardian in writing whether a confirmed place is offered, and the enrolment can proceed.

Parents/guardians who **do not** have an up to date AIR Immunisation History Statement and whose child is **not** eligible for the grace period cannot be offered a place and are referred to Australian Childhood Immunisation Register or to an immunisation provider (refer to Appendix 4 – Letter for parents/guardians who do not have acceptable immunisation documentation).

**Note: Places will not be allocated to children until any outstanding fees owed to the service by the family is paid, or a payment plan is agreed to between the family and the service (refer to *Fees Policy*).**

### Enrolment Records

Enrolment records (*refer to Definitions*) form part of the enrolment procedure and are completed by families after they have been allocated a place, and before commencing attendance.

Access to completed enrolment forms will be restricted to the person responsible for the enrolment process, the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor and educators at the service, unless otherwise specified by the Approved Provider.

### Allocation within Groups

Where Tarralla Kindergarten provides more than one funded four year old program or funded three-year-old program, places within the programs will be allocated on acceptance of a place at the centre by the **Tarralla Kindergarten Enrolment Officer** as follows:

- Timing of submission of the online preference form
- Needs of the individual children
- Needs of the group

*Please note: In extenuating circumstances, written applications for special consideration for specific group allocations for both 3 and 4 year old class placements may be forwarded to the Educators and Committee of Management for consideration.*

### Second Year Registration

- Families of children who have been determined as eligible for a second year must complete and submit a kindergarten registration form for a second year, signed and dated by the early childhood teacher.
- It will be weighted with the relevant points and allocated accordingly.
- A Declaration of Eligibility Form for a second year of kindergarten must be completed and submitted to the relevant funding authority.

### Children Younger than the Eligible Preschool Age

- If a child is aged less than four by April 30 in the year they are to attend Kindergarten, the family must request early school entry approval in writing for their child to attend school in the following year. Requests should be made to the officer in charge, usually a director of the relevant government education authority region, or the non-government school that the child will be attending.
- Should the child not attend school the following year, the child will not be eligible for another year of funded preschool, as identified in the relevant funding criteria.

### Children Older than the Eligible Preschool Age

- Some children may turn six years of age during their preschool year. This is usually relevant in the case of children who have been identified as requiring a second year of preschool.
- Children who will turn six during the preschool year must apply for an exemption from school from the relevant Regional Director of the education department.

- Families must complete an 'Exemption from School due to attendance in kindergarten program' form before the child starts kindergarten and submit it to relevant regional office of the education department authority. The form is available on the website or by contacting the Regional Office.
- The kindergarten service must sight the approved exemption letter from relevant education authority and note that it has been sighted on the child's enrolment record. Data on the number of children attending Kindergarten who are six years plus, and confirmation that the exemption was sighted for each child, must be provided as part of funding data collection process.

### Withdrawals and late/mid year offers

Some children who have commenced Kindergarten may benefit from withdrawing from the program, in order to access Kindergarten in the following year.

- A withdrawal can occur without any impact on government funding for that child's place the following year, only if it is implemented **before** the first funding data collection that occurs in, or around April each year.
- If a withdrawal occurs later in the year, the government funding will not be available in the next year.
- When a withdrawal occurs, a fee adjustment will be made of either correct invoicing or fee reimbursement.
- Parents/guardians must notify the Enrolment Officer in writing of their wish to withdraw their child from Tarralla Kindergarten, stating the date of their withdrawal.
- The Enrolment Officer will notify the Educator, IT (for removal of email addresses), Fees Officer (refer to the **Fees Policy** for information on what fees are payable), Secretary (to remove them from the register of members) and MIKA of the withdrawal.
- If there are currently enrolled children who indicated a preference for the group now available due to the withdrawal, this place will be offered to the next on the waitlist determined by timing of submission of the online preference form for 3 and 4 year old programs
- Once all internal changes to groups are made, MIKA will offer the place available to the next on the waitlist and will email the acceptance offer to the parent/guardian. Once accepted the Enrolment Officer will contact the parents/guardians directly to organise enrolment in line with this policy.

### Cancellations

Families to notify Tarralla Kindergarten in writing of their intention to leave the service. If the service is not informed, fees will continue to be generated for that place.

## ATTACHMENT 3. SAMPLE OF KINDERGARTEN ENROLMENT FORM

## ATTACHMENT 4. LETTER FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS WITHOUT ACCEPTABLE IMMUNISATION DOCUMENTATION

Tarralla Kindergarten  
38 Gracedale Avenue  
Ringwood East VIC 3135

[Insert date]

Dear [insert name]

Re: Enrolment at Tarralla Kindergarten for [insert year]

I am contacting you regarding your tentative place for [insert child's name] at Tarralla Kindergarten in the [insert 3 year old or 4 year old program] in [insert year].

Under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* early childhood education and care services cannot enrol a child unless the parent/guardian has provided AIR Immunisation History Statement.

AIR Immunisation History Statement includes evidence of immunisations and is used to assess whether your child is fully vaccinated for their age.

As we have not received acceptable immunisation documentation for [insert name of child] by the due date, and your child is not eligible for the 16 week grace period, we are unable to confirm a place at our service for [insert year] and your child's name has been removed from our list.

Immunisation programs are effective in reducing the risk of vaccine preventable diseases. Immunisation from an early age helps protect your child against serious childhood infections. Further information about immunisations for your child is available from:

- your doctor
- Maroondah City Council, Tel 1300 88 22 33 or <http://www.maroondah.vic.gov.au/Community-support-services/Immunisation>
- National Immunisation Information Line Tel. 1800 671 811
- Australian Immunisation Register: [www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/australian-immunisation-register](http://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/australian-immunisation-register)
- Better Health Channel website: [www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/campaigns/no-jab-no-play](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/campaigns/no-jab-no-play)

Should you wish to re-apply for a place for [insert child's name], you will need to visit MIKA – [www.mika.org.au](http://www.mika.org.au) to reenrol by completing a new enrolment application accompanied by an AIR Immunisation History Statement. The new application would be considered in line with Tarralla Kindergarten's *Enrolment and Orientation policy*.


Yours sincerely

[Insert name]

[Insert title]

Tarralla Kindergarten

## Example of an immunisation history statement



Australian Government  
Department of Human Services

**medicare**

### Immunisation history statement

**As at:** 01 June 2019

**For:** ARMANDO D BOWERS

**Date of birth:** 01 Nov 2017

**Immunisation status:** up to date

Schedule	Immunisation	Date given	Brand name given	Provider type
Birth	Hepatitis B	01 Nov 2017	Engerix-B	Hospital
2 months	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Hepatitis B	01 Jan 2018	Infanrix Hexa	GP
	Polio Hib		Prevenar 13	
	Pneumococcal Rotavirus		RotaTeq	
4 months	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Hepatitis B	01 Mar 2018	Infanrix Hexa	GP
	Polio Hib		Prevenar 13	
	Pneumococcal Rotavirus		RotaTeq	
6 months	Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Hepatitis B	01 May 2018	Infanrix Hexa	GP
	Polio Hib		Prevenar 13	
	Pneumococcal Rotavirus		RotaTeq	
12 months	Measles Mumps Rubella Meningococcal C Hib	01 Nov 2018	MMR II Menitorix	GP
18 months	Measles Mumps Rubella Varicella	01 May 2019	Priorix-Tetra	GP
<b>Next immunisation/s due</b> Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis Poliomyelitis				<b>Date due</b> 01 Nov 2020

## ATTACHMENT 5. CANCELLATION OF ENROLMENT AND NON-ATTENDANCE

### FOR FUNDED KINDERGARTEN

#### Cancellation of Enrolment

Families MUST notify Tarralla Kindergarten and/or an Enrolment Officer in writing of their intention to cancel their child's enrolment. Fees will continue to be generated for that place until the Tarralla Kindergarten is notified.

**Note:** This process does not apply to vulnerable children (*refer to Definitions*). Children and families that are experiencing vulnerability are to be supported according to their individual needs. Where children/families are linked to Child Protection and not attending; early childhood teacher or educator will need to inform their Case Officer.

#### Non-attendance

- Term One  
Families that have accepted a placement and have not completed an enrolment form and not attended the service within the first 3 weeks of Term One will be contacted and informed their placement has been cancelled.
- Families Traveling Overseas  
Families are required to notify Tarralla Kindergarten prior to extended periods of travel, and ensure any applicable fees are paid if they wish to return to the service.
- Non-contactable Families
  - After two/three weeks of a child not attending the service, early childhood teacher or educator to call the family. If there is no response, educator to log this attempt and place in the child's file.
  - After second week of the child not attending and the family has made no attempts to contact the service, early childhood teacher or educator to contact the family via phone/text and/or email. If there is no response, Educator to log this attempt and place in the child's file.
  - After third week of non-attendance, early childhood teacher or educator to inform nominated supervisor and cross check families contact details.
- Nominated supervisor or approved provider to email family, ensuring a response date is documented in the email.
- If the family have made no attempt to communicate with the service before the response date, post a final attempt letter, ensuring a response date is documented in the letter.
- If the family has not responded to the final attempt letter before the response date, their placement will be cancelled.